

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

VICTIMS OF COMMUNISM MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

HON. DANA ROHRABACHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 17, 2012

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I submit a speech by former House Member Joseph J. DioGuardi which highlights the disastrous effects Communism had for the Albanian population in the Balkans and the ongoing efforts of the people there to find healing. The following is a copy of those remarks.

VICTIMS OF COMMUNISM MEMORIAL

The Honorable Joseph J. DioGuardi

I want to thank the leaders of the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, especially Dr. Lee Edwards and Ed Priola. And, on behalf of all Albanians and freedom-loving people everywhere, I hasten to commemorate here today the historic deeds of the late Congressman Tom Lantos, who cofounded this Memorial with President George W. Bush, and who was the original architect of the full diplomatic recognition of Albania by the United States in June 1990 and the independence of Kosovo in February 2008.

I also want to thank my good friend Congressman DANA ROHRABACHER, who supported this memorial from the beginning, but could not be with us today.

My wife, Shirley Cloyes, a recognized Balkan scholar, is also here. She just wrote an article for this occasion, entitled "The Denial of Memory: It Is Time for Albania To Confront Its Communist Past." Copies will be available for those who are interested at the reception.

Let me also introduce Pellumb Lamaj and Rajmond Sejko, survivors who spent years doing hard labor in one of the most brutal prisons in Communist Albania, called Spaç. (You can read about their stories in Shirley's article.)

Annette Lantos, 22 years ago, almost to the day, your late husband, Tom Lantos, and I were the first U.S. officials in 50 years to enter the State of Albania, then still under the boot of communism. (You were with us on that historic day.) We went with a strong message, after crossing the border from Kosovo, which was under the Serbian Communist regime's brutal occupation. We told Communist Dictator Ramiz Alia that the Berlin Wall had been torn down in October (1989), and that it was time to tear down the Communist iron curtain still separating Albania and the Albanian people from democracy, Europe, and the rest of the world. Annette, we started a movement. Within weeks, people were rushing into foreign embassies seeking asylum, and by September 1990, a huge boat loaded with thousands of freedom-seeking Albanians left the port of Durres for the shores of Italy, much like my father's Albanian ancestors did in the 15th century to escape the onslaught of the Ottoman Turks.

But here we are today—to pay tribute to the victims of communism all over the world. I

want to say a few words about the most brutal atheistic Communist regime that held the Albanian people hostage in their country, which was turned into a prison through state-sponsored terror, with crimes against humanity as its hallmark. The Albanian people had fought hard against the Italian fascist regime under Mussolini and the German Nazis under Hitler. Their honor code of besa (trust/faith) gave them the strength, moral and physical, to save every Jew in Albania and over 2,000 who fled there from Yugoslavia and Western Europe for protection during the Holocaust. Unfortunately, the Albanian people were betrayed during World War II by a new leader, Enver Hoxha, who replaced Nazi occupation with the most brutal Stalinist Communist regime anyone could imagine, for 45 years.

Hoxha's aim was to kill the freedom-loving spirit of the Albanian people and to destroy their communal soul in favor of building a totalitarian state under the rule of his Communist Party. His psychopathic regime instilled fear and terror in every household—fear of strangers, fear of authority, and even fear of betrayal by family, friends, and neighbors seeking favor with Communist officials. Hoxha's regime created an inhuman lack of trust in anyone and everything. Husbands could not trust their wives, parents their children, and siblings each other. By breaking the ancient Albanian honor and trust code of besa, communism created a culture where one had to be constantly on watch and on guard, not knowing where the next threat to life, limb, and family might strike.

This horrible state of terror was "formally" abandoned in Albania in 1992, with the first democratic election. Nevertheless, two decades later, the scars of communism and the twin cultures of fear and corruption still linger in Albania. Political parties openly fight for power, and the spoils of corruption keep the country out of the European Union, while former Communist neighbors, such as Slovenia, Croatia, Romania, Greece, and Serbia, are either already in the EU or on the path to admission.

On behalf of the victims of communism in Albania, Mr. Ambassador (addressing Albanian Ambassador Gilbert Galanxhi), I am taking this opportunity to appeal to your government to bring real democracy to Albania, to apologize formally to the victims of communism and their families, to set up a truth and reconciliation commission, and finally to open the Communist archives for all to see, which will allow families to begin the long process of healing and restore trust in the government and its leaders.

As Shirley Cloyes DioGuardi, Balkan Affairs Adviser to the Albanian American Civic League, wrote in her October 2011 article, "The Protracted Fall of Communism in Albania":

"I have come to the conclusion in recent months that the biggest mistake in post-Communist Albania was that the criminals of the Hoxha era were not brought to trial and that the country never instituted a truth and reconciliation commission. . . ."

Burying the Communist Albanian past has brought neither justice nor healing to those who suffered. If anything, it has continued their suffering. This reminds me of the Jewish survivors of the Holocaust who were forced to suffer in silence for years until Israel sought to fully reveal the traumatic legacy of Nazism and to shock the conscience of the world—beginning with the capture and trial in 1961 of Adolf Eichmann, one of the chief architects of Hitler's plan to exterminate European Jewry. In Albania, I believe that we need to start the process of healing the pain of the past (a past that is very much alive today) by obtaining from the Albanian government as full accounting as possible of the Hoxha era. The names of those persecuted, imprisoned, and executed by the Hoxha regime should be released to both the Albanian public and the international community.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF HENRY SCHIMBERG

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 17, 2012

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the memory of Henry A. Schimberg—a talented entrepreneur and distinguished member of the Santa Barbara community. Mr. Schimberg passed away on June 29, 2012 while traveling in Europe with his wife, Marjorie.

Henry Schimberg was born in Chicago in 1933 and went on to attend Beloit College in Wisconsin, where he received his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1954. Henry started his extremely successful career as a truck driver at Royal Crown Bottling Co. in Chicago in 1958. After decades of working in the bottling industry, Henry became the president and COO of Coca-Cola Enterprises in 1990; in 1998 he became the company's CEO. During his tenure, Coca-Cola Enterprises experienced the most financially successful period in its history.

Mr. Schimberg shared a deep passion for ethics with my late husband, Walter. Henry was deeply involved with the Walter H. Capps Center for the Study of Ethics, Religion, and Public Life at the University of California, Santa Barbara and the Center's efforts in developing a strong sense of personal and business ethics among future business and corporate leaders. The Center's annual undergraduate seminar, "Ethics, Enterprise, and Leadership," is an innovative course designed in part by Mr. Schimberg that introduces students to the diverse frameworks of ethical decision-making and teaches them to evaluate actual corporate and business dilemmas from ethical, legal and business perspectives. Henry was a regular speaker at the course and was greatly admired by his students and the faculty at UCSB. I have no doubt that his legacy will be carried on through this wonderful course that upholds values dear to his and my family's hearts.

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